

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) today voted in favor of The College Opportunity and Affordability Act (H.R. 4137), landmark legislation to address the soaring price of college tuition and remove other obstacles that make it harder for qualified students to go to college. The College Opportunity and Affordability Act passed by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 354-58.

"Today's bipartisan vote is yet another victory for students across the nation seeking the American dream of a college degree," **said Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez.** "From San Antonio to Del Rio to El Paso, I hear every day from college students and their families that the skyrocketing cost of higher education is making it harder for them to achieve the American dream of a college degree. As a Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I am especially proud of my friend Congressman Chet Edwards's provision to remove some of the barriers for higher education for the children of our service members. Today's passage of the College Opportunity and Affordability Act moves us one step closer to bring real relief to college students and hard working parents everywhere."

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act (H.R. 4137) would reform and strengthen the nation's higher education programs to ensure that they operate in the best interests of students and families. The legislation is the second major step that the new Congress has taken to make college more affordable and accessible for all qualified students. Last year, Congress enacted into law The College Cost Reduction Act (H.R. 2669), a \$20 billion increase in college financial aid over the next five years and the largest increase in student aid since the G.I. Bill of 1944.

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act would address rising tuition costs by encouraging colleges to rein in price increases, ensuring that states maintain their commitments to higher education funding, and providing students and families with consumer friendly information on college pricing and the factors driving tuition increases.

The legislation also [strengthens provisions](#) previously approved by the House to avoid conflicts of interest in the student loan programs. The bill's new provisions include requiring better consumer disclosures and protections on private student loans.

In addition, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act would:

- [Streamline the federal student financial aid](#) application process;
- [Make textbook costs more manageable](#) for students by, among other things, helping them plan for textbook expenses in advance of each semester;

- Allow students to receive year-round Pell Grant scholarships;
- [Strengthen college readiness and support programs for minority](#) and low-income students;
- Increase college aid and support programs for veterans and military families;
- Improve safety on college campuses and help schools recover and rebuild after a disaster;
- Ensure equal college opportunities and fair learning environments for students with disabilities; and
- Strengthen our nation's workforce and economic competitiveness by boosting science, technology, and foreign language educational opportunities.

H.R. 4137 is a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the primary federal law aimed at expanding college access for low- and middle-income students. The bill is supported by a broad coalition of students, colleges and universities, consumer rights advocacy groups, minority organizations, and more.

Congressman Rodriguez is a Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

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